

National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 www.nwr.noaa.gov



PUBLIC NOTICE

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PACIFIC COAST GROUNDFISH FISHERY

Changes to the commercial limited entry fixed gear primary sablefish season tier limits

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces changes to the commercial limited entry fixed gear primary sablefish fishery's tier limits for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery off Washington, Oregon, and California, **effective at 0001 hours (local time) June 29, 2004**. These management measures were recommended by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) at their June 13-18, 2004 meeting in Foster City, California.

NMFS made an error in calculating the limited entry fixed gear primary sablefish fishery tier limits for the 2004 season. The tier limits were calculated from the 2004 sablefish acceptable biological catch (ABC) rather than from the optimum yield (OY). Thus, the 2004 tier limits were substantially higher than they should have been and, if fully harvested, may result in allowing the fisheries to exceed the sablefish OY. NMFS will continue to track landings in this fishery, and if landings are tracking high and approaching the sablefish OY, NMFS will consult with the Pacific Council at its September 12 - 17, 2004 meeting to determine what further adjustments may be necessary in this fishery. The Pacific Council recommended, and NMFS is implementing, reductions in the primary season sablefish tier limits as follows:

Tier 1 will be reduced from 69,600 lb to **64,300 lb**,

Tier 2 will be reduced from 31,600 lb to 29,200 lb, and

Tier 3 will be reduced from 18,100 lb to **16,700 lb.**

These are the limits that should have been set in place in May, had they been calculated from the sablefish OY instead of the ABC.

A permit holder who has already landed his or her tier limits is not in violation of these regulations if the holder was complying with the regulations in effect at the time of landing. For permit holders who at this time have only partially achieved their tier limits, any past catch during the 2004 primary season will count toward the adjusted, lower tier limit. For example, a stacked Tier 1 and Tier 2 permit would have previously had a cumulative limit of 101,200 lb and now has a cumulative limit of 93,500 lb. If 70,000 lb have already been landed on a stacked Tier 1 and Tier 2 permit prior to this inseason action, 23,500 lb would remain to be fished on those stacked permits.

For more information contact: NMFS Northwest Region at 206-526-6140 or visit our website at http://www.nwr.noaa.gov, click on "Pacific Coast Groundfish;" NMFS Southwest Region at 562-980-4000; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at 360-249-4628; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 541-867-4741; or the California Department of Fish and Game at 707-441-5797 (Eureka), 510-581-7358 (Belmont), 562-342-7184 (Los Alamitos), 858-546-7167 (La Jolla).

Any discrepancies between this public notice and the Federal Register will be resolved in favor of the Federal Register.

- ► Visit the NMFS Northwest Region website for current groundfish management regulations, information, and RCA boundary coordinates and maps. http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1sustfsh/gdfsh01.htm
- To receive Pacific Coast Groundfish public notices via e-mail, please e-mail your request to westcoastgroundfish@noaa.gov